I Heart Aliens

Space, the final frontier. Or, is it? In the 2016 film, *Arrival* (produced by Shawn Levy), aliens take center stage in a movie about love and loss. There was love for language, love for science, and love for one another added into this suspenseful, heartbreaking feature. Set in the present day, aliens land on Earth, and it’s up to a language professor played by Amy Adams to bridge the communication gap between the World and the aliens. However, the film has an unexpected beginning and end involving the death of Professor Bank’s daughter. The professor ends up discovering the future and knows her only child will die, but she chooses to have her anyway, which lead the viewer to analyze one important statement. Humans will choose the idea of love over the inescapable end of death.

First, the viewers are led to believe that Professor Bank’s daughter dies at the very beginning of the movie. However, she has not even been born yet. The point is the viewer is getting a glimpse of what it feels like for Professor Banks to be with her child and lose her all at once. “A key part of love is empathy” (Skoll 81). This quote rings true to the movie *Arrival* because Amy Adam’s character feels empathetic for herself through the whole film. “Memory is a strange thing” (Villeneuve 2016). She knows her child will die and feels devastated for herself, but she also knows she will feel unconditional love, so she still chooses to have her baby.

Secondly, Professor Banks is faced with her surprising love for the aliens themselves. She chooses to connect with them. “How about we just talk to them before we start throwing
math problems at them?” (Villeneuve 2016). The professor decides to take off her safety suit and show them her face, forging a bond that neither viewers nor supporting characters alike expect. “That sometimes love runs smoothly, sometimes not” (Trivedi 69). This is a line from a poem included in Harish Trivedi’s work written about the great Taj Mahal. The building of the Taj sometimes did not run smoothly, just like Professor Banks learning the alien language. Banks makes the decision to grow close with the aliens, even though they could decide to kill her. She chose her love for them over a possible death for herself.

In the end, Banks ultimately saves the world from global war and meets her future husband. However, Banks knows the information she has received will end in the death of her marriage. “I forgot how good it felt to be held by you” (Villeneuve 2016). She forgets because her husband leaves her after finding out she already knows their daughter will die. Banks decides she would rather feel the love of her husband and then later feel the death of their marriage, than not feel that love at all.

Without a doubt, Arrival, was a film involving deep thought and connection. The main character reflected on human nature. Humans turn to love, when in need and when faced with death. Whether humans are grieving a loved one or possibly dealing with an ended marriage, they embrace the love from those close to them for comfort. Humans can never escape death, but they will always be able to choose love.
Works Cited

